

REMARKS

An associate of the undersigned discussed the outstanding Office Action with the Examiner during a telephone conversation on June 24, 2008. It was pointed out that although the claims did not recite certain limitations discussed in the outstanding Office Action at paragraph 7, the Applicant was willing to amend the claims to include those limitations. Thus, the independent claims (1, 12, 19, and 20) have been amended to include the recitation: "wherein said left and right widths of said left and right portions prevent foam from entering the cavity."

It was pointed out during the telephone conversation that changing the size of the Hattori "affixation member" does not disclose the claimed invention because a scale change (making all features bigger or smaller) would not satisfy the limitation "the sum of said left and right portion widths is larger than said width of said central strip region." The Examiner seemed to understand that the size of the left and right widths of the left and right portions of the invention distinguishes the invention from Hittori and is important to achieving desired results, but disagreed that a size change is limited to a scale change.

It was also pointed out during the telephone conversation that Hattori teaches the use of molds or guards 122 for protecting the stems 24, and that the invention of the subject application eliminates the need for such molds or guards. The Examiner seemed to understand this point, and indicated that this argument should be included in the Applicant's intended Response to the Office Action. In addition, it was pointed out that a technician placing the invention in a mold need not be as precise in centering it in the mold cavity, because the size of the left and right portion widths accommodates slight misalignments, and still prevents foam from entering the cavity. The Examiner seemed to understand this point as well, and indicated that this argument should also be included in the Applicant's intended Response to the Office Action.

Turning to the outstanding Office Action, the independent claims (1, 12, 19, and 20) have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Hattori (U.S. Patent No. 5,662,853) in view of Fleuchaus (U.S. Patent No. 6,842,950).¹ The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejections, and requests reconsideration in view of the following.

The independent claims now all recite, "wherein said left and right widths of said left and right portions prevent foam from entering the cavity." Hattori is an example of a prior art design that does not prevent foam from entering the cavity. As seen in Figs. 6a-6c, Hattori teaches that in molding the body 12 to the fastener 20, stem molds 122 are used to protect the stems 24 from molten material that leaks into the space 120 of the mold 116. See the paragraph beginning at column 10, line 10. The left and right widths of the left and right ledge regions of Hattori do not prevent foam from entering the cavity. The present invention eliminates the need for such stem molds or anything similar.

Also, the independent claims recite "the sum of said left and right portion widths is larger than said width of said central strip region," and it was acknowledged in the Office Action that this feature is not disclosed by the cited references. Although it is asserted that "it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in art at the time the invention was made that the sum of said left and right portion widths is larger than the width of the central strip region when one row of fasteners is eliminated and the sum of the left and right portion widths is increased since a change in the size of a prior art device is a design consideration within the skill of the art," the Applicant believes that eliminating a row of fasteners would not disclose the claimed invention, and in any event the claimed feature is not obvious in view of the references. The ledge region is the portion of the fastener 20 that is above the space 120 and comes into contact with the mold 116, and eliminating a row of fasteners 24 would not even change the size of the ledges to meet the claimed limitation. In fact, it appears that Hattori would have no use for

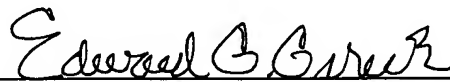
¹ The Office Action Summary page indicates that claims 1-8 and 12-20 are rejected, but paragraph 5 of the Office Action begins by stating that Claims 1-8, 15, 17 and 18 are rejected. The next numbered paragraph, paragraph 6, addresses the Examiner's response to Applicant's arguments. For purposes of this response, the Applicant has assumed that the rejections of the remaining claims, including independent claims 12, 19, and 20 are located within paragraph 5.

larger ledges since the part of the mold 116 that contacts the ledges at the top of space 120 only spans a short distance (Figs. 6a-6c). In any event, the fact that the sum of the left and right portion widths is larger than the width of the central strip region gives the invention practical qualities that are not present in the references. Even if a user slightly misaligns the article with respect to the cavity, the article will still be properly formed because the wide ledge parts and relatively narrow hook strip would improve the sealing. In contrast, prior art designs such as Hattori require a user to precisely place the fastener 20 in the mold 116, because if the fastener is slightly off-center, one of the small ledge portions will have less contact with the mold 116 and will not block the molten material from flowing into the space 120, thereby spoiling the fastener.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicant believes that claims 1-8 and 12-20 are in condition for allowance and the issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

As the Examiner indicated during the aforementioned telephone conversation, if there are any further issues after this amendment, she will give a telephone call to the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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